



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Deschutes National Forest  
Bend-Ft. Rock Ranger District

1230 NE 3<sup>rd</sup>, Suite A-262  
Bend, OR 97701  
(541) 383-4000

File Code: 1950-1

Date: January 27, 2010

## NOTICE OF 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Dear Reader:

This letter is to inform you that the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) has been completed. Public comment is now being requested for 30 days. This letter provides a summary of the purpose and need for action and the alternatives that were developed and analyzed. If you commented during the scoping period, a Draft EA is being provided with this mailing. Copies of the Draft EA are available on request at the address found at the end of this letter or may be viewed at the website which is also found at the end of this letter.

### LOCATION

The proposed project location for the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway (Scenic Byway) Welcome Station is approximately five miles southwest of Bend, Oregon (Figures 1 and 2). The project area is located adjacent to the Scenic Byway (Highway 46, Century Drive), directly across the highway from the junction with Forest Road 41. The legal location is in Township 18 South, Range 11 East, Section 21.

The location is within the Scenic Views management area as designated by the Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). It is also within the Ryan Ranch Key Elk Area. It is east of the Northwest Forest Plan boundary. There are no water sources or threatened and endangered species of plants, animals, or fish. There are no archaeological sites. It is an area that has been heavily impacted by previous uses.

### PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

One of the primary goals in the Byway's Corridor Management and Interpretive Plan is to provide information and interpretation at key locations through public and private partnerships. The Cascade Lakes Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan was originally developed in 1996 for the Travel Information Council and the Oregon Department of Transportation. This plan was updated in 2009. The vision is to have "The convenience and quality of facilities and the interpretive centers, visitor centers and museums that provide environmental and historical background...." Likewise, one of the goals and objectives of the Plan is "To provide information and interpretation at key locations."

As a major gateway to the Deschutes National Forest via the Scenic Byway, the Welcome Station would benefit the byway traveler and central Oregon communities. With over 2.5 million annual visitors to the Deschutes National Forest, it would be a place where Forest Service staff and community volunteers engage byway travelers with recreation and scenic byway information. This facility would serve as an important visitor contact point for the Forest Service and would also provide for the sale of maps, permits, and Forest passes.



## **PROPOSED ACTION**

Because of the high use that occurs in the Cascade Lakes Recreation Area and along the Deschutes River, this site provides a strategic location for the construction of a Scenic Byway Welcome Station (Figure 3). The following actions are being proposed:

- The project would occur on approximately 2 acres of Forest land. Approximately 150-200 blackbark ponderosa pine would be removed for the development of the Welcome Station and associated access road and parking area. Approximately 40-90 trees would remain on the same 2 acres.
- Construction of a rustic Cascadian style, one-story building, approximately 1,500 square feet.
- Construction of a drive-through parking area that would accommodate 25 cars and 2 to 5 recreational vehicles (RVs). The parking area would be intended for facility visitation only.
- Construction of an interpretive kiosk.
- A gate would be located at the access road entrance that would prohibit parking outside of the Welcome Station operating hours.
- A split rail fence would delineate the Welcome Station from the surrounding Forest lands.
- The facility would be ADA compliant, energy-efficient, and designed to have a low impact footprint on the site. Power would be supplied on-site or from a private utility source.
- The proposed building site would be located at an intersection and accessed by turn lanes coming from both directions; therefore, a speed reduction/turn lane would likely be constructed for safety concerns by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

## **OTHER ALTERNATIVE ANALYZED**

**Alternative 1 (No Action):** Alternative 1 is the No Action alternative. This alternative is required by law and serves as a baseline for comparison of the effects of the action alternative, Alternative 2.

Under Alternative 1, there would be no new Byway Welcome Station constructed. The same level of interpretation and information would remain. Current management plans would continue to guide management. There would be no change in the level of ongoing management activities within the project area. All custodial activities such as law enforcement, and response to emergencies, including wildfire, would continue. No change would occur in current management direction or in the level of ongoing management activities, such as thinning and hazard tree removal.

## **COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES**

<b>Proposed Activity</b>	<b>Alternative 1 Existing</b>	<b>Alternative 2 Proposed</b>
<b>Entrance/Exit Road</b>	None	200 feet
<b>Parking Lot</b>	None	28-30 spaces
<b>Welcome Station</b>	None	1,500 square feet
<b>Informational Kiosk</b>	None	Kiosk
<b>Entrance Road Gate</b>	None	Yes
<b>Split Rail Fence</b>	None	3 feet high, 1,400 feet in length
<b>Trees Per Acre</b>	100-120 Trees	25-45 Trees

**Figure 1: Vicinity Map for Proposed Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway Welcome Station**

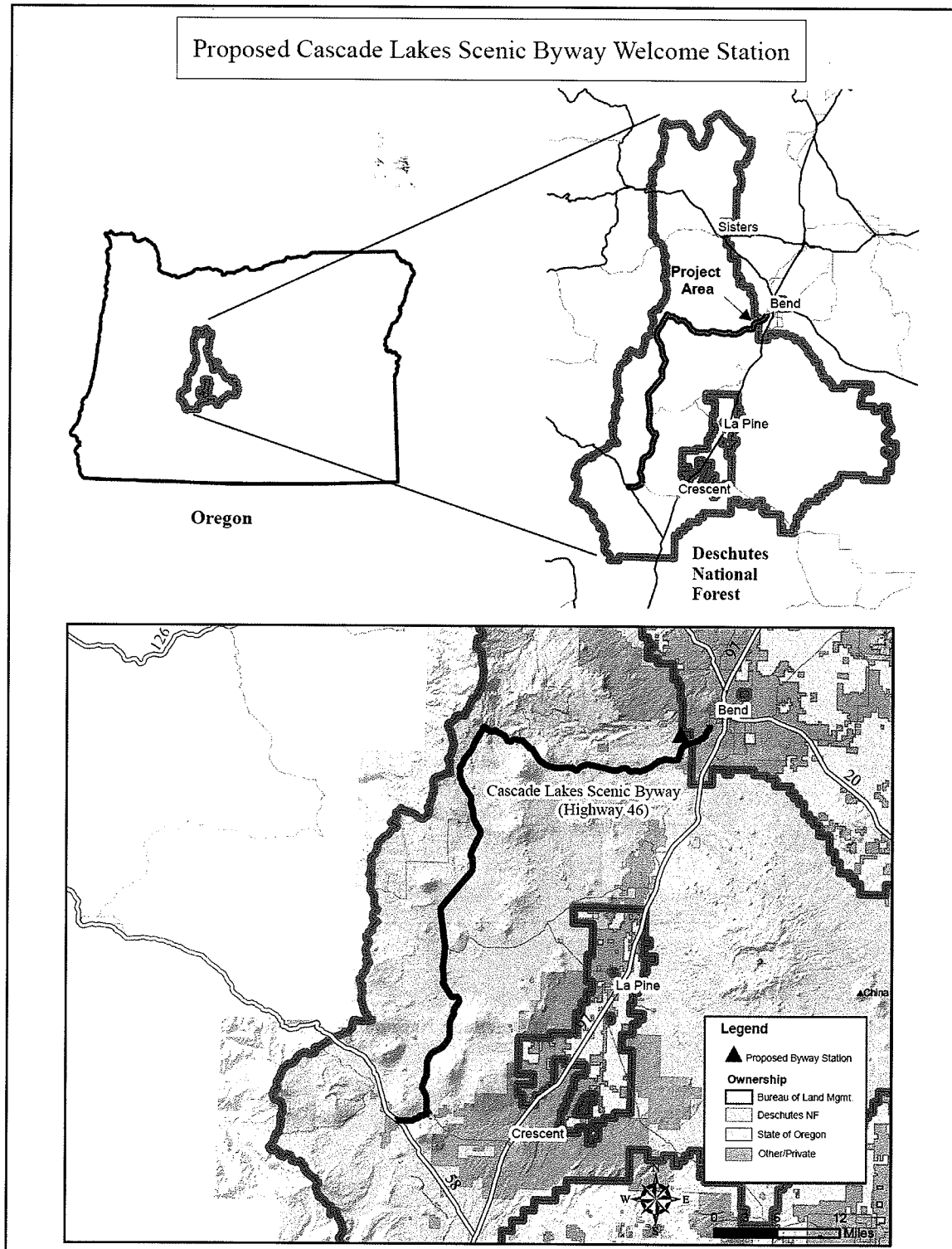
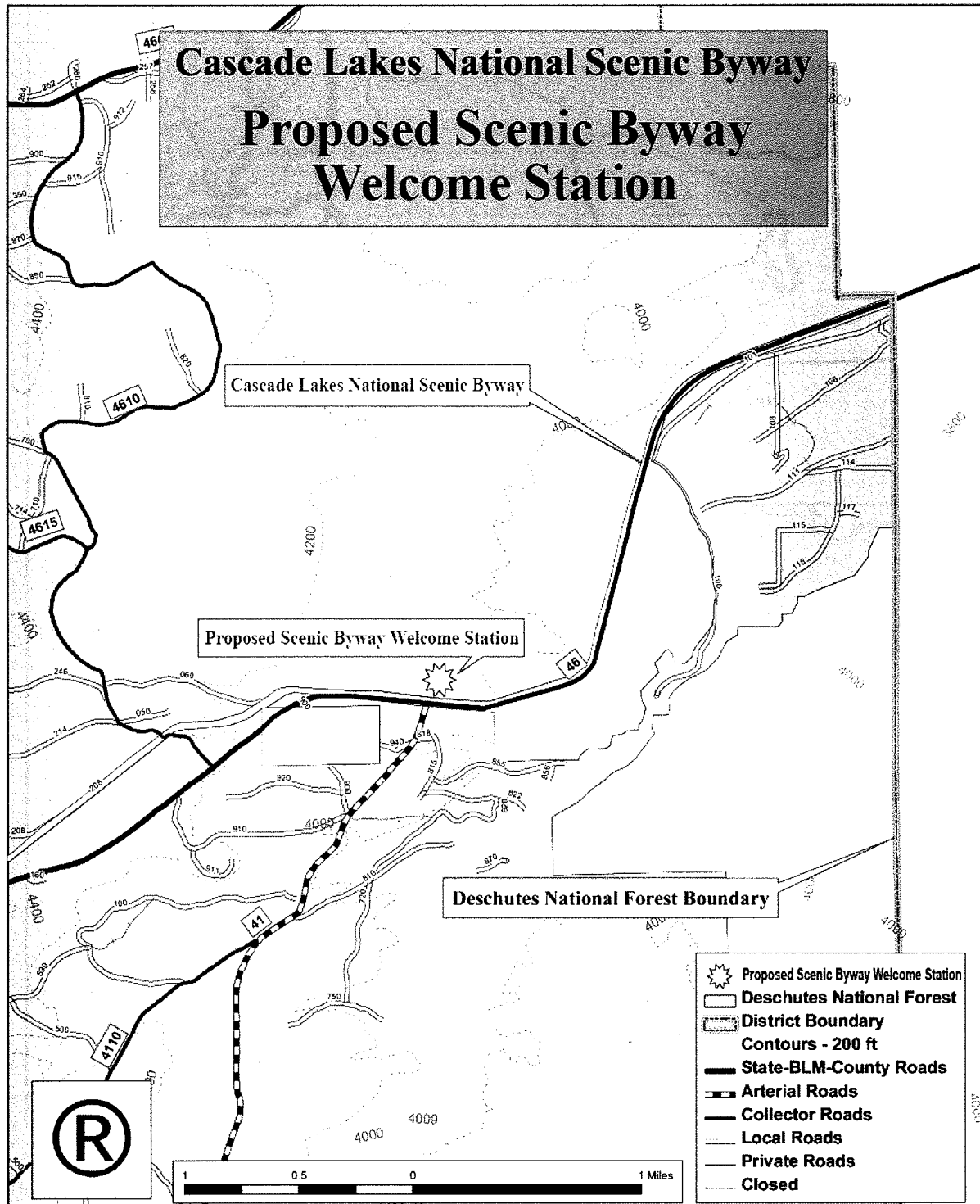
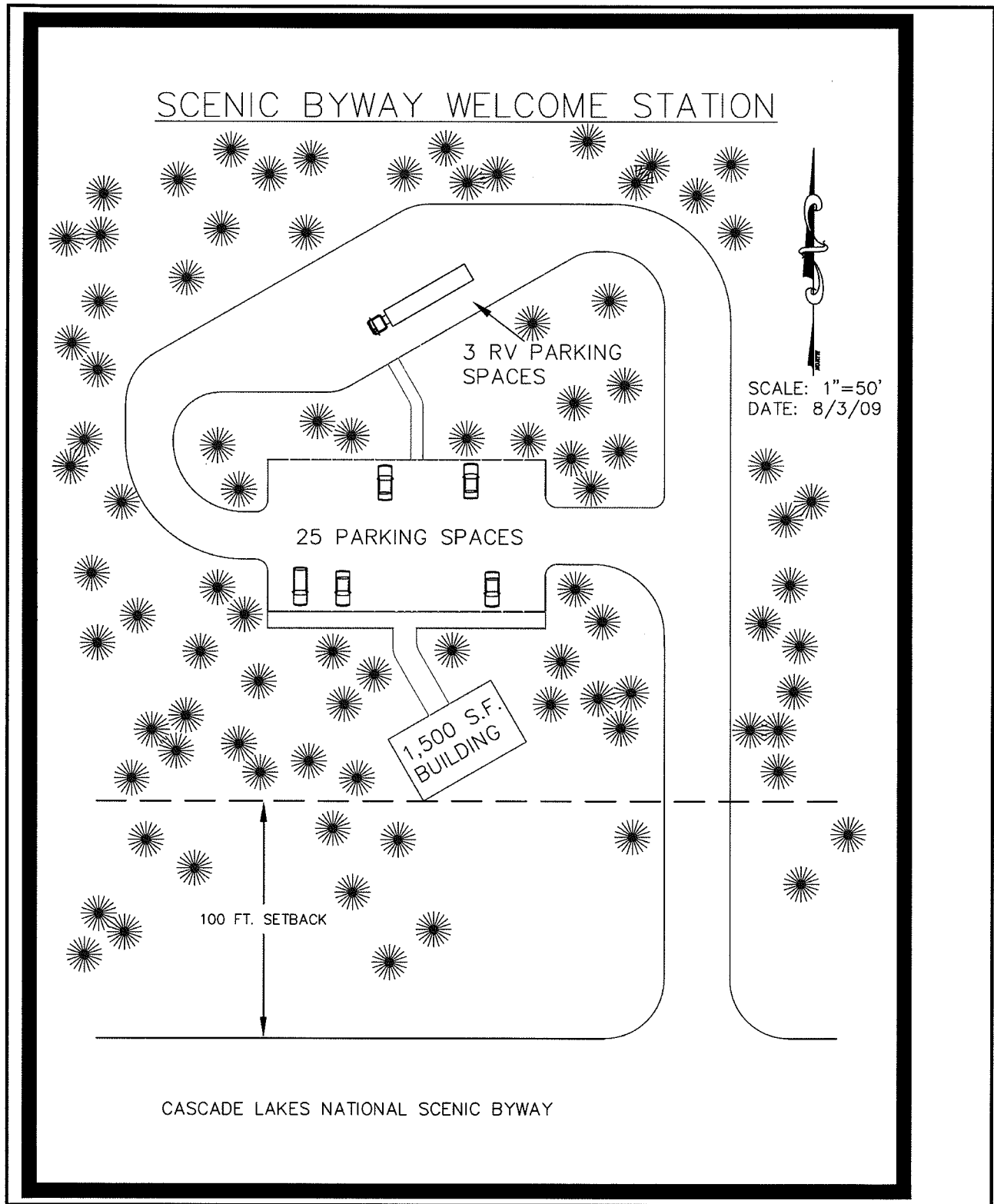


Figure 2: Proposed Location - Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway Welcome Station



**Figure 3: Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) Scenic Byway Welcome Station**



## OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENT

A notice of availability of the Draft EA and opportunity for comment will be published in the newspaper of record, *The Bulletin*. The 30-day comment period will begin on the date of publication of this notice. The Draft EA will also be placed on the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests Website, [www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/projects/units/bendrock/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/projects/units/bendrock/index.shtml).

Comments can be faxed to (541) 383-4700, sent electronically, or hand delivered to 1230 NE Third Street, Suite A-262, Bend, Oregon between 7:45 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Electronic comments must be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf), or portable document format (.pdf) only. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, verification of identity will be required. E-mails submitted to email addresses other than the one listed above, in formats other than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. It is the responsibility of the commenter to confirm receipt of comments submitted by electronic mail.

Comments, including attachments, must be postmarked or delivered within 30 days of the publication of the Draft EA in *The Bulletin* in order to have standing to appeal. The publication date in *The Bulletin* is the exclusive means for calculating the time for comment. Those wishing to comment on this project should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Anyone wishing to obtain additional information on the project or a copy of the Draft EA should contact Robin Gyorgyfalvy at (541) 383-4786 or David Frantz at (541) 383-4721.

Sincerely,



A. SHANE JEFFRIES  
District Ranger